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(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau(43) International Publication Date
8 March 2001 (08.03.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/16827 A2(51) International Patent Classification⁷: G06F 17/60

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(21) International Application Number: PCT/US00/20636

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(22) International Filing Date: 31 July 2000 (31.07.2000)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

(30) Priority Data:
09/384,486 27 August 1999 (27.08.1999) US

(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

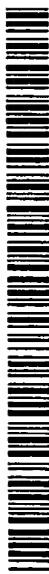
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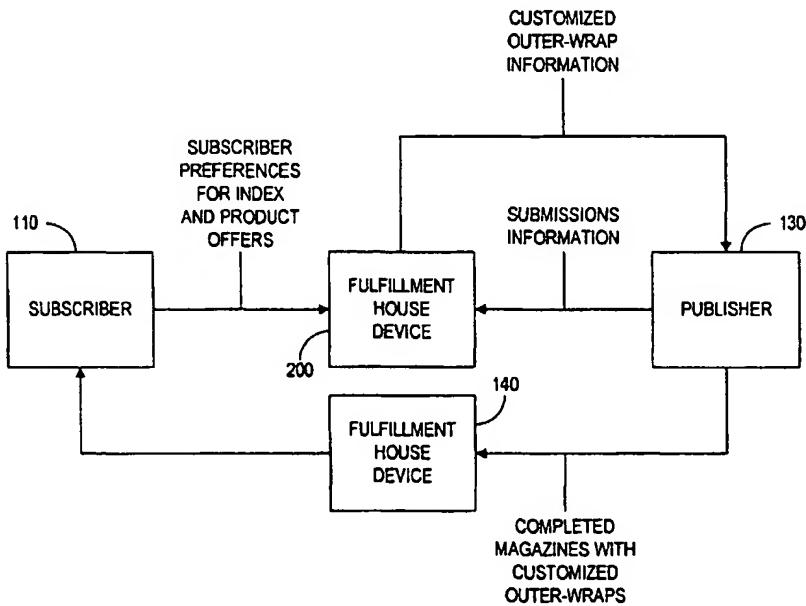
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR PROVIDING CUSTOMIZED OUTER-WRAP PRODUCT INFORMATION



WO 01/16827 A2



(57) Abstract: Systems and methods are provided wherein subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber of a periodical is received. Product information associated with a product offer is also received, and the received subscriber preference information and product information are compared. Based at least in part on the comparison, customized outer-wrap information is generated.



Published:

- *Without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report.*

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR PROVIDING CUSTOMIZED OUTER-WRAP PRODUCT INFORMATION

5 CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is related to U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/862,250, entitled "Method and System for Attaching Customized Indexes to Periodicals" and filed on May 23, 1997, the entirety of which is incorporated by reference herein as part 10 of the present disclosure.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The field of the invention is the generation of customized outer-wraps for 15 periodicals, and in particular is the placement of product information on customized outer-wraps.

A subscriber to a periodical typically seeks to quickly identify and locate the most relevant Standard Printed Content (SPC) included in an issue of the periodical. As used herein, the term "periodical" includes any publication that is issued under the 20 same title in regular intervals. As used herein, "SPC" of a periodical comprises one or more submissions that appear in a periodical, including, for example: an article; an advertisement; a special feature; a letter; a picture; a chart; a graph; a drawing; a product description; publication information; a blow-in card; a table of contents; an index; an alphanumeric string; and a subscription card.

The most relevant SPC to any given subscriber is likely to vary from that of other subscribers. This variation corresponds to the varying interests, requirements for information, and desires across subscribers. For example, a periodical about outdoor 25 activities may include SPC on adventure travel, environmentalism, scuba diving, mountaineering, etc. The SPC also is likely to include product advertisements, product reviews and other commentary on various products related to these and other areas. As used herein, the term "product" is meant to encompass any good or service offered for 30 value (sale, trade, etc.). Whereas one subscriber may be interested in scuba diving,

another may be interested in mountaineering. The subscriber interested in scuba diving may be interested in learning about a product such as a scuba regulator valve, a neoprene diving suit, etc. On the other hand, the subscriber interested in mountaineering may have no interest in the SPC in the periodical pertaining to scuba

5 diving and/or scuba products, but may be interested in a story about a new route to the top of a peak, and product reviews pertaining to climbing equipment. Each of these subscribers must rely upon the brief descriptions in the periodicals table of contents to identify articles of interest. However, the descriptions in the table of contents are often terse, and a subscriber may miss an article of interest. Also, the table of contents is

10 typically disadvantageously incomplete, because it does not include a guide to product information included in the SPC. For example, the table of contents does not typically identify and locate product advertisements in the periodical's SPC. Some periodicals include an index to advertisers. The index to advertisers lists the identity of each advertiser in the periodical, correlated with associated advertisement page numbers.

15 However, the index disadvantageously includes no descriptions or other information about the products offered by the advertisers and is not customized based on the subscriber's interests. A subscriber must therefore review the periodical, disadvantageously sifting through SPC that is not relevant to the subscriber's interests in order to identify and read relevant SPC.

20 A known system for helping a subscriber identify and locate SPC relevant to the subscriber is an abstract service. An abstract service produces "abstracts" or summaries of articles appearing in a periodical. An abstract is selected for distribution to a particular subscriber based upon that subscriber's interests, a description of which is typically supplied by the subscriber to the abstract service (e.g., as a reader profile).

25 The subscriber receives the targeted abstracts, reviews them, selects those of greatest interest, and then requests the corresponding full articles from the publisher. This advantageously helps the subscriber identify relevant SPC, but disadvantageously encompasses only a small subset of all of the SPC contained in the periodical. In particular, known abstract services disadvantageously ignore product information that is

30 included in each periodical, except perhaps as it may occur in an article.

Another known system for providing relevant SPC to a subscriber is adaptive content generation. In this known system, a periodical publisher collects subscriber profile data, and uses such data to provide targeted content to individual subscribers. For example, a periodical, upon determining that a subscriber has a 3-month old infant, 5 inserts an article especially relevant to three-month old babies in an issue of the periodical sent to that subscriber. The cover of the issue indicates that the article about three-month old infants is included in the issue. Adaptive content generation advantageously helps to ensure that at least some of the SPC in an issue is especially relevant to a subscriber's interests. However, adaptive content generation 10 disadvantageously fails to assist the subscriber in identifying and locating pre-existing SPC in the periodical and does not generally include product information.

In U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/862,250, entitled "Method and System for Attaching Customized Indexes to Periodicals" and filed on May 23, 1997, 15 applicants disclose a system and method for providing a subscriber with a customized index that identifies SPC within a periodical that matches the subscriber's predetermined interests and/or corresponds to the subscriber's predetermined preferences. The customized index can be advantageously attached to the periodical. This can advantageously be made even more useful by providing a system and method 20 for providing subscriber-customized information about product information included in the periodical. In particular, this subscriber-customized outer-wrap information can advantageously be included on an outer-wrap customized for the subscriber.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

25 An embodiment of the present invention uses information about a subscriber and information about a product or products to provide the subscriber with a customized outer-wrap along with an issue of a periodical. The outer-wrap can be customized to appeal to the subscriber's interests, and can include, for example, a coupon, product offer information, manufacturer or vendor contact information, a 30 Uniform Resource Locator (URL), and other information to facilitate the purchase of the product by the subscriber.

In one embodiment of the present invention, subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber of a periodical is received, such as by being received by a fulfillment house. Product information associated with a product offer is also received, and the received subscriber preference information and product information are compared. Based on the comparison, customized outer-wrap information is generated.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 shows a system in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 shows a fulfillment house apparatus in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3 shows a tabular representation of a subscriber database in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4 shows a tabular representation of a category database in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 5 shows a tabular representation of a submission database in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 shows a tabular representation of a product database in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 7 shows a tabular representation of a customized outer-wrap database in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 8 is a flow chart illustrating a fulfillment house method in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a flow chart illustrating a publisher method in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

An embodiment of the present invention advantageously uses information about a subscriber to provide the subscriber with a subscriber-customized periodical outer-

wrap that includes product information (e.g., product offers) specifically tailored to be relevant to that subscriber's interests, requirements for information, etc.

A system in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention is shown in FIG. 1. A fulfillment house device 200 receives subscriber preference information from a subscriber 110. As used herein, "subscriber preference information" is any information useful in determining if a piece of information (e.g., submission information included in SPC or a product offer) should be brought to the attention of the subscriber in connection with the periodical. One type of subscriber preference information indicates a particular product preference on the part of the subscriber. For example, the subscriber completes a questionnaire that gathers information about, for example, particular products or types of products of interest to the subscriber, the subscriber's favorite retailers, and product manufacturer preferences of the subscriber. Subscriber preference information may also include, for example, the general interests of the subscriber and demographic information about the subscriber. As will be described, some of the information about a subscriber may be stored in the form of one or more category codes.

The subscriber 110 can provide his or her subscriber preference information to the fulfillment house device 200 using any of a variety of mechanisms. For example, the subscriber 110 can complete a questionnaire through a Web site on the Internet, complete (and mail) a blow-in card indicating personal interests and demographic information, answer questions asked by a live telephone operator or interact with an interactive voice response system. As will be appreciated the subscriber 110 may instead provide the information in any other number of ways to the fulfillment house 200, such as by using email or facsimile communications. Also note that compensation may be provided to the subscriber in exchange for the subscriber information. The compensation may include, for example, an extended subscription, a reduced subscription price or reduced product prices with respect to product offers included on an outer-wrap.

Note that the present invention is not limited to receiving subscriber preference information from the subscriber 110 directly. In another embodiment, for example,

subscriber preference information about a subscriber is received from a third party, such as by purchasing a subscriber profile composed from multiple sources.

The fulfillment house device 200 also receives and stores submission information (information about SPC) for a periodical from a periodical publisher 130.

- 5 The submission information includes, for example, information about products or manufacturers mentioned in articles or advertisements, information about the types of articles in the periodical (e.g., that an article that may appeal to young people or that an advertisement may be of interest to people that purchase stocks online). The submission information can include information about anything in the periodical,
- 10 including, for example, product reviews, advertisements, descriptions or photographs of products, etc. According to an embodiment of the present invention, the submission information is stored in a submission database in the form of one or more category codes. According to an embodiment of the present invention, the submission information may comprise category codes similar to the codes used to store subscriber information (e.g., demographic information, interest information and manufacturer information). By way of example, a submission may be associated with readers who earn over \$30,000 per year and are interested in gourmet cooking.
- 15

- 20 The fulfillment house device 200 can then compare subscriber preference information for a subscriber 110 with the submission database for a given issue. Note that a submission database can vary by any variable, such as by issue, by demographic feature of the subscriber 110, by periodical, etc. The comparison may be used to generate customized outer-wrap information for the subscriber 110. Consider the case where subscriber preference information for a subscriber indicates the subscriber is strongly interested in watches manufactured by a particular designer. The submission database for an issue of a fashion magazine may include category codes that indicate the type of product and the designer of each product included in an issue of the magazine. According to an embodiment of the present invention, records in the submission database that indicate either (i) that the submission is related to watches; or (ii) that the submission is related to the particular designer of interest to the subscriber,
- 25
- 30 are associated with that subscriber.

The fulfillment house device 200 also has a product database that may store, for example, product offers from a number of sellers, such as product manufacturers. For example, the product database may include an offer for a watch. According to an embodiment of the present invention, the product database may also store category codes indicating that a product offer may be of interest to subscribers that also are associated with those category codes. For example, if a product offer and a subscriber are both associated with the same category code (e.g., a category code reflecting an interest in gourmet cooking), that product offer may be of interest to the subscriber. According to another embodiment of the present invention, product offer category codes may be mapped to subscriber category codes. For example, product offers for cookbooks and kitchen utensils be associated with category codes that are mapped to a subscriber category code that reflects an interest in cooking.

Note that information from in the product database may be provided to the fulfillment house 200 by, for example, the periodical publisher 130. This may be the case, for example, if the product information is an offer to purchase a recording of an interview with a celebrity (parts of which may have been printed in the periodical).

For each subscriber, the fulfillment house can select those product offers that have at least one category code that is both (i) of interest to the subscriber and (ii) related to a submission in the periodical. According to other embodiments of the present invention, the product offer may have, for example, at least one category code that is either (i) of interest to the subscriber or (ii) related to a submission in the periodical.

Based on this determination, customized outer-wrap information is created and sent from the fulfillment house device 200 to the publisher 130. In another embodiment, the customized outer-wrap information also includes information about products that are neither (i) of interest to the subscriber (as indicated by the category codes) or (ii) related to a submission in the periodical. For example, a manufacturer may provide a payment to the fulfillment house device 200 to include information about a product offer in a subscriber's outer-wrap. Thus, a tennis racket manufacturer can include information about an offer for particular tennis racket model in the products database for an issue of a sports magazine, even when the submissions in that magazine

do not include information associated with, for example, tennis. Such a payment to the fulfillment house 200 may be made, for example, by a product manufacturer, product retailer or product distributor.

The publisher 130 uses the customized outer-wrap information received from 5 the fulfillment house device 200 to include the appropriate product information in an outer-wrap customized for that subscriber. The generated (e.g., printed) outer-wrap may include, for example a product offer, an advertisement (including, for example, a political advertisement), a telephone number, an e-mail address, a URL, a coupon, a product sample, a photograph, a graphic, a bar code, a product identifier and a product 10 offer code.

The completed periodical, such as a magazine, may then be sent to the subscriber 110 through a distribution channel 140 (including, for example, the U.S. mail service).

A subscriber 110 that receives the periodical may be interested in one or more 15 of the product offers included on the outer-wrap. In this case, the subscriber 110 may, for example, contact the fulfillment house by placing a telephone call or accessing a Web page. The subscriber 110 can provide information to the fulfillment house (such as by providing information associated with a subscriber identifier and/or the product being purchased). Note that compensation may be provided to a subscriber that makes 20 such a purchase. The compensation may include, for example, an extended subscription, a reduced subscription price, or a free subscription to a supplemental periodical.

Note that a subscriber 110 may have arranged to have a "continuous" 25 subscription to the periodical. That is, the fulfillment house may automatically charge an amount associated with the cost of the subscription to a payment identifier stored in the subscriber database at a time prior to the subscription expiration date. In this case, the fulfillment house may arrange for the subscriber to purchase the product without receiving a payment identifier. For example, the fulfillment house may automatically charge an amount associated with the payment identifier stored in the subscriber 30 database.

Note also that customized outer-wraps may not be created for all subscribers. For example, only those subscribers with subscriptions that are automatically renewed may receive customized outer-wraps.

FIG. 2 illustrates a fulfillment house device 200 according to an embodiment of 5 the present invention. The device 200 comprises a processor 220, such as one or more Pentium® processors, coupled to: a communication port 240 configured to communicate through a communication network (not shown in FIG. 2); Random Access Memory (RAM) and Read Only Memory (ROM) units 231, 232; and a clock 242. The communication port 242 may be used to communicate, for example, with the 10 periodical distributor to receive submission information and transmit customized outer-wrap information to be printed on an outer-wrap.

The processor 220 is also in communication with a storage device 230. The storage device 230 may comprise any appropriate storage device, including combinations of magnetic storage devices (e.g., a hard disk drive), optical storage 15 devices, or semiconductor memory, such as RAM and ROM.

The storage device 230 stores a program 225 for controlling the processor 220. The processor 220 performs instructions of the program 225, and thereby operates in accordance with the present invention. For example, the processor 220 may receive subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber of a periodical. The 20 processor 220 may also receive product information associated with, for example, product offers. The processor 200 can compare the subscriber preference information and the product information, and customized outer-wrap information can be generated based at least in part on the comparison.

The program 225 may be stored in a compressed, uncompiled and/or encrypted 25 format. The program 225 furthermore includes program elements that may be necessary, such as an operating system, a database management system and "device drivers" used by the processor 220 to interface with peripheral devices. Appropriate device drivers and other necessary program elements are known to those skilled in the art and are not described in detail herein.

30 Note that the processor 220 and the storage device 230 may be, for example: (i) located entirely within a single computer or other computing device; or (ii) connected

by a remote communication medium, such as a serial port cable, telephone line or wireless frequency transceiver. In one embodiment, the device 200 may comprise one or more computers that are connected to a remote database server.

5 Note that, as used herein, information may be "received" by, for example: (i) the device 200 from another device; or (ii) a software application or module within the device 200 from another software application, module or any other source.

As shown in FIG. 2, the storage device 230 also stores: a subscriber database 300 (described in detail with respect to FIG. 3); a category database 400 (described in detail with respect to FIG. 4); a submission database 500 (described in detail with respect to FIG. 5); a product database 600 (described in detail with respect to FIG. 6); and a customized outer-wrap database 700 (described in detail with respect to FIG. 7). The schematic illustrations and accompanying descriptions of the databases presented herein are exemplary, and any number of other database arrangements could be employed besides those suggested by the figures.

15 As shown in FIG. 3, the subscriber database 300 can include a subscriber identifier (ID) 301. The subscriber ID 301 may be, for example, an alphanumeric code that uniquely identifies a subscriber of a periodical. Each subscriber ID is associated with a name (e.g., the subscriber's name) 302; a periodical name 303; a subscription expiration date 304; an address 305 (e.g., a subscriber or subscription address to which 20 issues of the periodical are sent, and which may include a physical or electronic address, such as an e-mail, URL, or facsimile address or number); a phone number 406 (e.g., a subscriber voice, facsimile or Internet telephony number); and a credit card number 407 (or, according to other embodiments, any other payment identifier such as a debit account number or e-cash authentication information).

25 According to an embodiment of the present invention, the subscriber database 300 also includes one or more category codes 308 associated with the subscriber that may be used to determine, for example, a product offer that may be of interest to the subscriber.

FIG. 4 is a category code database 400 according to one embodiment of the 30 present invention. Shown in FIG. 4 are samples of category codes 402 and category code descriptions 404 associated with those category codes. As will be appreciated, the

category codes 402 and associated category code descriptions 404 and merely illustrations and any number of different category codes 402 and category code 404 descriptions may be stored instead. According to another embodiment of the present invention, no category code descriptions are stored. In this case, the category code 5 database 400 may not be required.

FIG. 5 illustrates a submission database 500 according to an embodiment of the present invention. As shown in FIG. 5, a record in the submission database 500 includes a periodical name 501 and an issue number 502. In addition, a number of submissions are included in the record, each submission including a submission ID 503.

10 The submission ID 503 may be, for example, an alphanumeric code that uniquely identifies a submission for a periodical. Each submission also includes a submission title 504. In addition, each submission is associated with one or more category codes 505, which may be the same codes that are used in the subscriber database 300 and the category code database 400.

15 According to another embodiment of the present invention, the fields 503, 504, 505 and 506 are replaced with a single field that lists all of the category codes associated with the issue 502 of the periodical 501 (i.e., regardless of which submission or submissions in the periodical are associated with each category code 506).

Note that the category codes 505 can indicate that the product is of particular 20 interest to individuals between the ages of 30 and 45, is more relevant to individuals with annual incomes above \$35,000, etc. Besides relating the product to demographic information, the category code 506 can also identify a product type. For example, the codes "M02-22" and "P01-12" may indicate a ROLEX watch.

FIG. 6 illustrates a product database 600 according to an embodiment of the 25 present invention. As shown in FIG. 6, the product database 600 stores a number of records, and each record may include an alphanumeric product ID 601 that uniquely identifies a product or product offer. Each product ID 601 is associated with a product descriptor 602, a product category code 603 and an offer descriptor 604 (e.g., information that may be printed on an outer-wrap). Note that the product category code 30 603 may use the same codes that are used in the subscriber database 300, the category code database 400 and the submission database 500.

FIG. 7 illustrates a customized outer-wrap database 700 according to an embodiment of the present invention. In general, the outer-wrap database 700 stores information that may be provided to the publisher 130 so that the publisher 130 can print a customized outer-wrap for the subscriber.

5 As shown in FIG. 7, a record in the customized outer-wrap database 700 includes a subscriber ID 701. The subscriber ID 701 may be, for example, based on the subscriber ID 301 stored in the subscriber database 300. In addition, a number of product offers are included in the record, each product offer including a product descriptor 702 and an offer descriptor 702, which may include information from the 10 product descriptor 602 and the offer descriptor 604 stored in the product database 600.

According to one embodiment of the present invention, product offers are selected from the product database 600 based on information about the subscriber and/or information about the SPC of the periodical. For example, the product category code 603 associated with an offer may be compared with the category codes 506 15 associated with the submissions in the periodical and the category codes 308 associated with the subscriber. In one embodiment, a product offer is only included in the customized outer-wrap database 700 if a product category code 603 associated with the offer is associated with both the subscriber and the SPC of the periodical. According to another embodiment of the present invention, a product offer may be included in the 20 customized outer-wrap database 700 if a product category code 603 associated with the offer is associated with either the subscriber or the SPC of the periodical. According to still another embodiment of the present invention, a product offer can be included in the customized outer-wrap database 700 even when no product category code 603 25 associated with the offer is associated with either the subscriber or the SPC of the periodical.

According to one embodiment of the present invention, the customized outer-wrap database 700 also includes a customized URL 704. As shown in FIG. 7, the URL may uniquely define a Web page hosted by the fulfillment house device 200 ("www.ffh.com/") as well as the subscriber ID 301 and product ID 601 associated with 30 the offer. In this way, the customer may contact the fulfillment house device 200 using the URL and the fulfillment house device 200 can identify: (i) the subscriber who is

contacting the fulfillment house device 200 and (ii) the product that the subscriber is purchasing. Moreover, because the fulfillment house device 200 may already have a payment identifier, such as a credit card number 307, associated with the subscriber, that payment identifier may be used by the fulfillment house device 200 to receive payment for the product.

According to another embodiment of the present invention, in place of a URL the outer-wrap may have a telephone number and access code (e.g., the subscriber ID 301 and the product ID 601). The subscriber enters the access code using the telephone and the fulfillment house device 200 is thereby made aware of the (i) the subscriber 5 who is contacting the fulfillment house device 200 and (ii) the product that the subscriber is purchasing as before.

The information in the customized outer-wrap database 700 can then be used by the publisher 130, which prints the information on a customized outer-wrap that is attached to an issue of the periodical that is sent to the subscriber 110. In one 10 embodiment, the outer-wrap is a paper covering that is attached to a paper version of the periodical, which is then sent through the mail to the subscriber 110. In another embodiment, the outer-wrap is text included in an e-mail, including an e-mail that includes the SPC of the periodical that is then sent to the subscriber 110. In yet another embodiment, the outer-wrap is the first page of a facsimile transmission that also 15 includes the SPC of the periodical that is sent to the subscriber 110 via facsimile. Generally, the outer-wrap represents at least one special area of a package sent to the subscriber 110, wherein the package includes the SPC of a periodical and customized outer-wrap information placed in the special area.

The databases discussed above are exemplary, and are not meant to express any 20 limitation on the implementation of the present invention. For example, the data in the products database can be combined with the information in the submission database to form a products/submission database. In further illustration of embodiments of the present invention, subscriber preference information can include any demographic 25 information relevant to determining the preferences of the subscriber, including subscriber preferences expressed as a product category, a manufacturer name, a product name, a retailer name, a model number or name, a price range (e.g., only items costing 30

less than \$300), etc. Content information descriptive of SPC (including product information) can include information descriptive of: an article in the periodical, an advertisement, a photograph or graphic, a sample included in the periodical (e.g., perfume, software, a song, a video, etc.), and so on. Customized outer-wrap product

5 information can include a product description, the location of further information about the product inside the periodical (e.g., an advertisement, product review, etc.), an advertisement for the article, a URL (e.g., that includes a product code, an offer code, etc.) a coupon for the product or set of products, a product name, a product manufacturer, a telephone number, an e-mail address, a mailing address, a photograph

10 or graphic, a bar code, a retailer name, a product identifier, a product offer code, etc.

FIG 8 is a flow chart illustrating a fulfillment house method according to an embodiment of the present invention. The flow chart in FIG. 8, as well as the other flow charts discussed herein, is not meant to imply a fixed order to the steps, and embodiments of the present invention can be practiced in any order that is practicable.

15 At 802, subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber of a periodical is received. At 804, product offer information is received.

The subscriber preference information and the product offer information are compared at 806, and customized outer-wrap information is generated, based at least in part on the comparison, at 808. The customized outer-wrap information may then be

20 used, for example, to create an outer-wrap for a copy of the periodical being sent to the subscriber.

FIG 9 is a flow chart illustrating a publisher method according to an embodiment of the present invention. At 902, customized outer-wrap information is received. The customized outer-wrap information is based, at least in part, on a

25 comparison of subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber and product offer information. A customized outer-wrap is then generated based on the received customized outer-wrap information at 1004.

The subscriber can use product information included on the customized outer-wrap to receive a discount on a purchase of a product (e.g., by redeeming a coupon

30 printed on the outer-wrap), to purchase a product (e.g., by entering a URL that includes a product and/or offer code and purchasing the product), to obtain further information

about the product (e.g., by calling a telephone number listed with the product information on the outer-wrap), etc.

Embodiments of the present invention provide a subscriber with customized outer-wrap information in connection with an outer-wrap of a periodical. This 5 customized outer-wrap information can be relevant to the subscriber's interests, and also can provide a guide to further information about specific products contained within the SPC of the periodical. It can also be used to distribute coupons, product offer information, and product information about products that may not be described within the SPC of the periodical. Although several embodiments of the present invention are 10 specifically illustrated and described herein, it will be appreciated that modifications and variations of the present invention are covered by the above teachings and are within the purview of the appended claims without departing from the spirit and intended scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for producing customized outer-wrap information for use with a periodical, comprising:

5 receiving subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber of the periodical;

receiving product information associated with a product offer;

comparing the subscriber preference information and the product information; and

generating customized outer-wrap information based on said comparison.

10 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving submission information associated with standard printed content of the periodical,

wherein said comparing further compares the submission information with at least one of the subscriber preference information and the product information.

15 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the subscriber preference information is associated with at least one category code, the submission information is associated with at least one category code and the product information is associated with at least one category code.

20 4. The method of claim 3, wherein information about the product offer is included in the customized outer-wrap information only when said comparison indicates that a particular category code is associated with at least two of the subscriber preference information, the submission information and the product information.

25 5. The method of claim 3, wherein information about the product offer is included in the customized outer-wrap information only when said comparison indicates that a particular category code is associated with all of the subscriber preference information, the submission information and the product information.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the customized outer-wrap information comprises an identifier associated with at least one of: (i) a product; (ii) the product offer; (iii) the periodical; and (iv) the subscriber.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising receiving a request to purchase a product, the request including the customized outer-wrap information identifier.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
retrieving a payment identifier associated with the subscriber from a subscriber database; and
processing the request to purchase the product using the payment identifier.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
receiving, prior to receiving the request to purchase the product, from the subscriber a request to subscribe to the periodical, including the payment identifier;
arranging for the subscriber to make a payment of an amount associated with the subscription using the payment identifier; and
storing the payment identifier in the subscriber database.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
automatically renewing the subscriber's subscription using the payment identifier.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said receipt of subscriber preference information comprises:
retrieving the subscriber preference data from a subscriber preference database.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said receipt of subscriber preference information further comprises:
providing an information request to the subscriber;
receiving the subscriber preference information from the subscriber in response to the information request; and
storing the subscriber preference information in the subscriber preference database.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the response to the information request is associated with an agreement to subscribe to the periodical received from the subscriber.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein said receipt of subscriber preference information comprises:

receiving subscriber preference information through at least one of: (i) a telephone call to an operator; (ii) a mailed message; (iii) a blow-in card; (iv) an interactive voice response unit; (v) dual tone multi-frequency telephone signals; (vi) a facsimile message; (vi) an e-mail message; and (viii) a Web page response.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein said receipt of subscriber preference information comprises purchasing the subscriber preference information from a third party.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber preference information comprises information associated with a category code.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber preference information comprises information associated with a type of product.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber preference information comprises information associated with a particular product.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber preference information comprises information associated with a product manufacturer.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber preference information comprises information associated with a product retailer.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the product information comprises at least one of: (i) an article; (ii) a photograph; (iii) a graphic; (iv) an advertisement; and (v) a sample.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein the product information comprises at least one of: (i) an article identifier; (ii) a page number; (iii) a content category; (iv) a type of product; (v) a particular product; (vi) a manufacturer; (vii) a retailer; (viii) a price range; and (ix) a product price.

5 23. The method of claim 1, wherein said receipt of product information comprises receiving product information from a publisher of the periodical.

24. The method of claim 1, wherein said receipt of product information comprises retrieving product information from a product database.

10 25. The method of claim 20, wherein information is stored in the product database in exchange for a payment

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the payment is received from at least one of: (i) a product manufacturer; (ii) a product retailer; and (iii) a product distributor.

15 27. The method of claim 1, wherein the customized outer-wrap information comprises information associated with at least one of: (i) a type of product; (ii) a product; (iii) a product manufacturer; (iv) a product retailer; and (v) a price range.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein the customized outer-wrap information comprises at least one of: (i) a page number; and (ii) an article title.

20 29. The method of claim 1, wherein the customized outer-wrap information comprises at least one of: (i) an advertisement; (ii) a telephone number; (iii) an e-mail address; (iii) a Uniform Resource Locator; (iv) a coupon; (v) a photograph; (vi) a graphic; (vii) a bar code; (viii) a product identifier; and (ix) a product offer code.

30. The method of claim 1, wherein said generating customized outer-wrap information is performed for a first category of subscriber and is not performed for a second category of subscriber.

25 31. The method of claim 30, wherein the first category of subscriber comprises subscriber's with subscriptions that are automatically renewed and the second category

of subscriber comprises subscriber's with subscriptions that are not automatically renewed.

32. The method of claim 1, wherein said receipt of subscriber preference information further comprises arranging for the subscriber to receive compensation in 5 exchange for providing the subscriber preference information.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein said compensation comprises at least one of: (i) a reduced subscription price; (ii) an extended subscription time; and (iii) a reduced product price.

34. The method of claim 1, wherein the customized outer-wrap information 10 comprises an identifier associated with at least one of (i) a product; (ii) the periodical; and (iii) the subscriber, and further comprising:

providing compensation to the subscriber if a request to purchase a product, including the customized outer-wrap information identifier, is received.

35. The method of claim 1, further comprising transmitting the customized 15 outer-wrap information to a publisher to be used for generating a customized outer-wrap attached to the periodical.

36. The method of claim 1, further comprising generating a customized outer-wrap attached to the periodical based on the customized outer-wrap information.

37. A device for producing customized outer-wrap information, comprising: 20 a processor; and

a storage device coupled to said processor and storing instructions adapted to be executed by said processor to:

receive subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber of the periodical;

25 receive product information associated with a product offer;

compare the subscriber preference information and the product information; and

generate customized outer-wrap information based at least in part on said comparison.

38. An apparatus for producing customized outer-wrap information, comprising:

- 5 means for receiving subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber of the periodical;
- means for receiving product information associated with a product offer;
- means for comparing the subscriber preference information and the product information; and
- 10 means for generating customized outer-wrap information based at least in part on said comparison.

39. A medium storing instructions adapted to be executed by a processor to perform a method for producing customized outer-wrap information, said method comprising:

- 15 receiving subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber of the periodical;
- receiving product information associated with a product offer;
- comparing the subscriber preference information and the product information;
- and
- 20 generating customized outer-wrap information based at least in part on said comparison.

40. A method of arranging for a product to be sold, comprising:

- receiving from a subscriber a request to subscribe to a periodical, the subscription request including a payment identifier;
- 25 arranging for the subscriber to make a payment of an amount associated with the subscription using the payment identifier;
- storing the payment identifier in a subscriber database;
- receiving subscriber preference information associated with the subscriber;
- receiving product information associated with a product offer;
- 30 comparing the subscriber preference information and the product information;

generating customized outer-wrap information based at least in part on said comparison, the customized outer-wrap information including an identifier associated with a product;

5 receiving from the subscriber through a communication network a request to purchase the product, the request including the customized outer-wrap information identifier;

retrieving from the subscriber database the payment identifier associated with the subscriber; and

10 arranging for the subscriber to purchase the product using the payment identifier.

41. A method for producing customized outer-wrap information for use with a periodical, comprising:

receiving subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber of the periodical;

15 receiving standard printed content of the periodical;

determining product information associated with standard printed content of the periodical;

comparing the subscriber preference information and the product information; and

20 generating customized outer-wrap information based at least in part on said comparison.

42. A method for producing customized outer-wrap information for use with a periodical, comprising:

receiving subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber of the 25 periodical;

receiving standard printed content of the periodical;

determining submission information associated with standard printed content of the periodical;

30 comparing the subscriber preference information and the submission information; and

generating customized outer-wrap information based at least in part on said comparison.

43. A method for producing a customized outer-wrap for a periodical, comprising:

5 receiving subscriber preference information associated with a subscriber of the periodical;

determining product information associated with standard printed content of the periodical;

comparing the subscriber preference information and the product information;

10 generating customized outer-wrap information based at least in part on said comparison; and

generating a customized outer-wrap attached to the periodical based on the customized outer-wrap information.

44. A method for producing a customized outer-wrap for a periodical to be provided to a subscriber, comprising:

receiving customized outer-wrap information, the customized outer-wrap information being based, at least in part, on a comparison of: (i) subscriber preference information associated with the subscriber, and (ii) product information associated with a product offer; and

20 generating the customized outer-wrap based on the received customized outer-wrap information.

45. The method of claim 44, further comprising:

sending product information associated with the standard printed content to a fulfillment house;

25 wherein said receipt of the customized outer-wrap information comprises receiving the customized outer-wrap information from the fulfillment house.

46. The method of claim 35, further comprising:

sending the standard printed content to a fulfillment house;

wherein said receipt of the customized outer-wrap information comprises receiving the customized outer-wrap information from the fulfillment house.

47. A device for producing a customized outer-wrap for a periodical to be provided to a subscriber, comprising:

5 a processor; and

a storage device coupled to said processor and storing instructions adapted to be executed by said processor to:

receive customized outer-wrap information, the customized outer-wrap information being based, at least in part, on a comparison of: (i) subscriber 10 preference information associated with the subscriber, and (ii) product information associated with a product offer; and

generate the customized outer-wrap based on the received customized outer-wrap information.

48. A apparatus for producing a customized outer-wrap for a periodical to be 15 provided to a subscriber, comprising:

means for receiving customized outer-wrap information, the customized outer-wrap information being based, at least in part, on a comparison of: (i) subscriber preference information associated with the subscriber, and (ii) product information associated with a product offer; and

20 means for generating the customized outer-wrap based on the received customized outer-wrap information.

49. A medium storing instructions adapted to be executed by a processor to perform a method for producing a customized outer-wrap for a periodical to be provided to a subscriber, said method comprising:

25 receiving customized outer-wrap information, the customized outer-wrap information being based, at least in part, on a comparison of: (i) subscriber preference information associated with the subscriber, and (ii) product information associated with a product offer; and

30 generating the customized outer-wrap based on the received customized outer-wrap information.

50. A method for producing customized outer-wrap information for use with a periodical, comprising:

receiving personal preference data comprising a category of interest to a subscriber;

5 receiving submission information comprising a category associated with the standard printed content of the periodical;

comparing the category of the personal preference information with the category of the submission information; and

generating customized outer-wrap information for use with the periodical based
10 on said comparing

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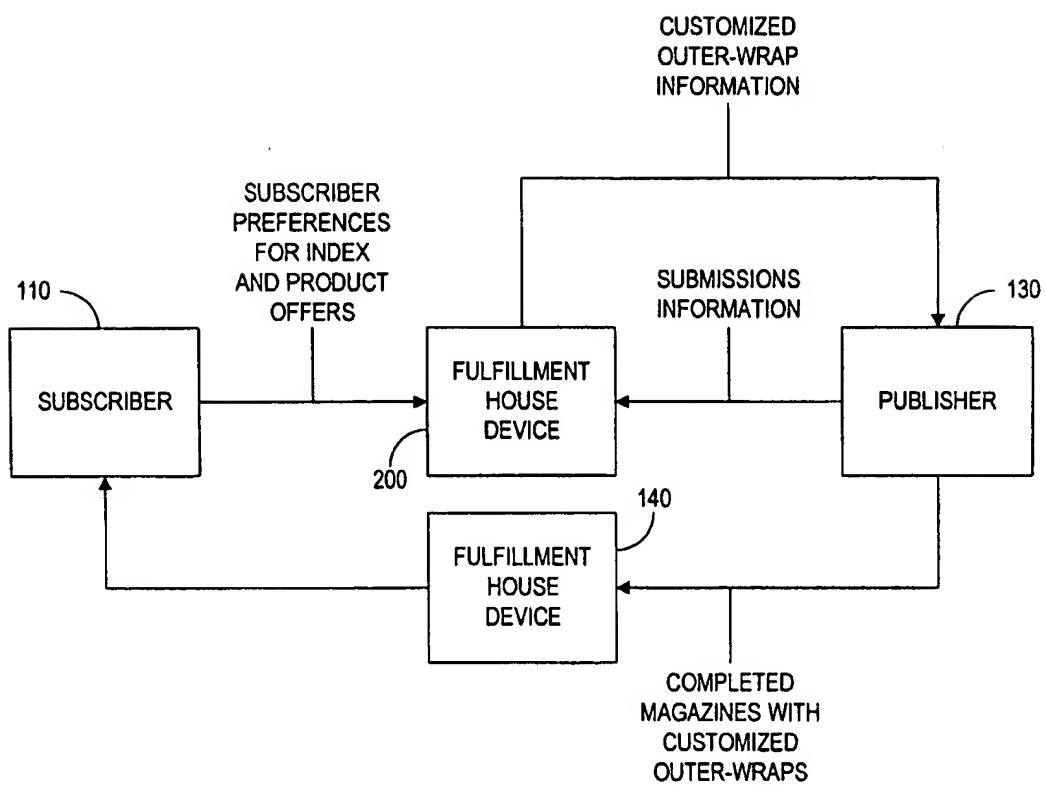


FIG. 1

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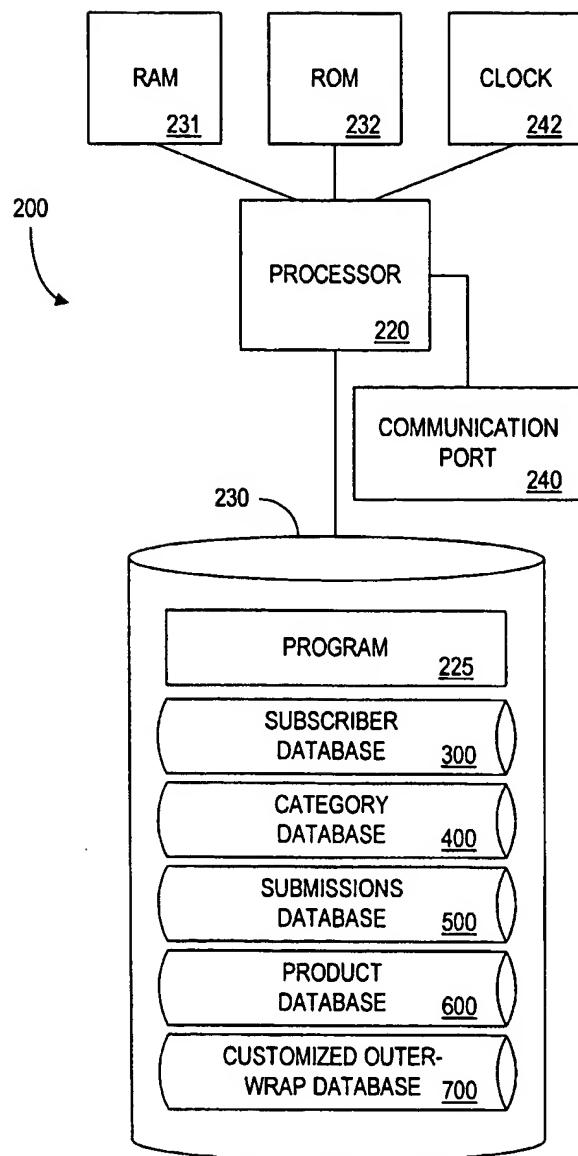


FIG. 2

300

SUBSCRIBER ID	NAME	PERIODICAL NAME	SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRATION DATE	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NUMBER	CREDIT CARD NUMBER	CATEGORY CODE(S)
<u>301</u>	<u>302</u>	<u>303</u>	<u>304</u>	<u>305</u>	<u>306</u>	<u>307</u>	<u>308</u>
0001	TOM FORREST	TIME	1/1/01	1 RED DR. ANYTOWN, XX 00000	(203) 555-3271	4028 1255 5689 8555	D01-15; P01-12; M02-22
0002	SUE GREEN	TIME	2/12/02	2 BLUE DR. ANYTOWN, XX 00000	(203) 555-4210	9141 4565 5582 5466	D03-1; I03-03; I02-32
0003	LLOYD KELLY	NEWSWEEK	3/23/01	3 GREEN DR. ANYTOWN, XX 00000	(203) 555-7683	4120 2316 5646 8791	D02-13; I04-21; A4-35

FIG. 3

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400
→

CATEGORY CODE	CATEGORY CODE DESCRIPTION
<u>401</u>	<u>402</u>
A4-35	ADDRESS (STATE) - NY
D01-15	DEMOGRAPHIC (AGE) - 45 TO 50
D02-13	DEMOGRAPHIC (INCOME) - \$45,000 TO \$50,000
D03-1	DEMOGRAPHIC (GENDER) - FEMALE
I02-32	INTEREST (NEWS) - FOREIGN AFFAIRS
I03-03	INTEREST (SPORTS) - BASEBALL
104-21	INTEREST (ENTERTAINMENT) - MUSIC, CLASSICAL
M02-22	MANUFACTURER (NAME) - ROLEX
P01-12	PRODUCT (TYPE) - WATCHES

FIG. 4

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500

PERIODICAL NAME - TIME		
<u>501</u>		
ISSUE NUMBER 10.10.02		
<u>502</u>		
SUBMISSION ID	SUBMISSION TITLE	CATEGORY CODES
<u>503</u>	<u>504</u>	<u>505</u>
S001	ARTICLE; "MAN OF THE YEAR"	I02-32
S002	AD; ROLEX WATCH	M02-22; P01-12
S003	ARTICLE; "NY IN THE SUMMER"	A4-35; I12-99

FIG. 5

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600

PRODUCT ID <u>601</u>	PRODUCT DESCRIPTOR <u>602</u>	PRODUCT CATEGORY CODE <u>603</u>	OFFER DESCRIPTOR <u>604</u>
CS112	COMPLETE INTERVIEW WITH MAN OF THE YEAR, TAPE OR CD	D01 - 13, 14, 15; I02 - 15, 32, 33	PURCHASE A RECORDING OF AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. X NOW FOR \$10.00!
KS338	SONY MAVICA - FD71 DIGITAL CAMERA	I01 - 14, 72; M02 - 121; P01 - 3	THIS CAMERA IS NOW JUST \$500.00!
HI239	KODAK DC200+ DIGITAL CAMERA	I01 - 14, 72; M02 - 101; P01 - 3	OWN A KODAK DIGITAL CAMERA FOR ONLY \$350.00!
SR989	18KT. GOLD SUBMARINER ROLEX WATCH	M02 - 22; P01 - 12	FOR A LIMITED TIME GET THE ROLEX SUBMARINER FOR ONLY \$12,000!
JG456	SEIKO SPJ057 WATCH	M02 - 17; P01 - 12	THE SEIKO SP J057 WATCH CAN NOW BE YOURS FOR THE LOW PRICE OF \$200.00!

FIG. 6

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700

SUBSCRIBER ID - 0001		
<u>702</u>	<u>703</u>	<u>704</u>
PRODUCT DESCRIPTOR	OFFER DESCRIPTOR	PRODUCT CATEGORY CODE
COMPLETE INTERVIEW WITH MAN OF THE YEAR, TAPE OR CD	BUY THIS INTERVIEW FOR ONLY \$10	WWW.FFH.COM/0001-CS112
ROLEX WATCH	SEE THE WATCH IN THE ROLEX ADVERTISEMENT, YOURS FOR ONLY \$1,000	WWW.FFH.COM/0001-SR989
SEIKO WATCH	SEE THE WATCH IN THE SEIKO ADVERTISEMENT, YOURS FOR ONLY \$50	WWW.FFH.COM/0001-JG456

FIG. 7

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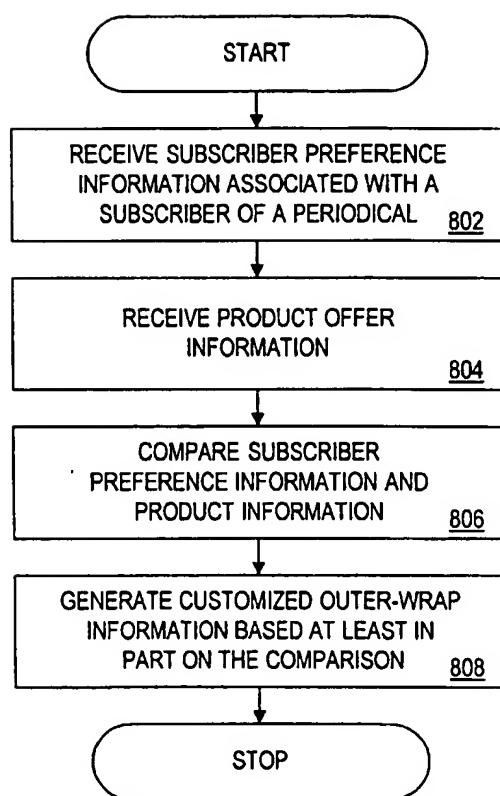


FIG. 8

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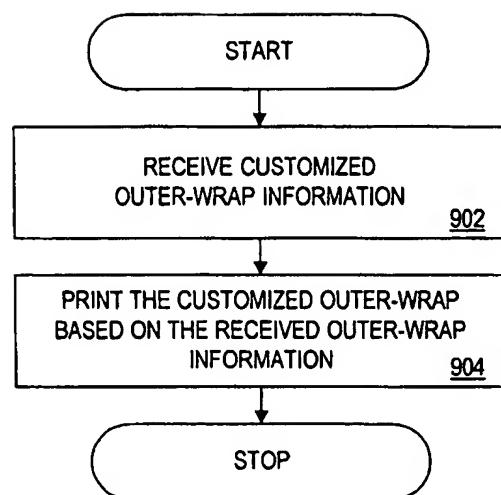


FIG. 9

REVISED VERSION

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
8 March 2001 (08.03.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/16827 A2

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: G06F 17/60 (81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US00/20636 (84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

(22) International Filing Date: 31 July 2000 (31.07.2000)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data: 09/384,486 27 August 1999 (27.08.1999) US

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Published:

— with declaration under Article 17(2)(a); without abstract; title not checked by the International Searching Authority

(48) Date of publication of this revised version: 6 June 2002

(15) Information about Correction:

see PCT Gazette No. 23/2002 of 6 June 2002, Section II

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

WO 01/16827 A2

(54) Title: SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR PROVIDING CUSTOMIZED OUTER-WRAP PRODUCT INFORMATION

(57) Abstract:

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

DECLARATION OF NON-ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 17(2)(a), Rules 13ter.1(c) and Rule 39)

Applicant's or agent's file reference 98-118W0	IMPORTANT DECLARATION		Date of mailing(day/month/year) 25/01/2002
International application No. PCT/US 00/ 20636	International filing date(day/month/year) 31/07/2000	(Earliest) Priority date(day/month/year) 27/08/1999	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC G06F17/60			
Applicant WAIKER DIGITAL, LLC et al.			

This International Searching Authority hereby declares, according to Article 17(2)(a), that **no international search report will be established** on the international application for the reasons indicated below

1. The subject matter of the international application relates to:
 - a. scientific theories.
 - b. mathematical theories
 - c. plant varieties.
 - d. animal varieties.
 - e. essentially biological processes for the production of plants and animals, other than microbiological processes and the products of such processes.
 - f. schemes, rules or methods of doing business.
 - g. schemes, rules or methods of performing purely mental acts.
 - h. schemes, rules or methods of playing games.
 - i. methods for treatment of the human body by surgery or therapy.
 - j. methods for treatment of the animal body by surgery or therapy.
 - k. diagnostic methods practised on the human or animal body.
 - l. mere presentations of information.
 - m. computer programs for which this International Searching Authority is not equipped to search prior art.
2. The failure of the following parts of the international application to comply with prescribed requirements prevents a meaningful search from being carried out:

the description the claims the drawings
3. The failure of the nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence listing to comply with the standard provided for in Annex C of the Administrative Instructions prevents a meaningful search from being carried out:

the written form has not been furnished or does not comply with the standard.
 the computer readable form has not been furnished or does not comply with the standard.
4. Further comments:

Name and mailing address of the International Searching Authority  European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL-2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl. Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer
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FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 203

The claims relate to subject matter excluded from patentability under Art. 52(2) and (3) EPC. Given that the claims are formulated in terms of such subject matter or merely specify commonplace features relating to its technological implementation, the search examiner could not establish any technical problem which might potentially have required an inventive step to overcome. Hence it was not possible to carry out a meaningful search into the state of the art (Rule 45 EPC). See also Guidelines Part B Chapter VIII, 1-6.

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that claims relating to inventions in respect of which no international search report has been established need not be the subject of an international preliminary examination (Rule 66.1(e) PCT). The applicant is advised that the EPO policy when acting as an International Preliminary Examining Authority is normally not to carry out a preliminary examination on matter which has not been searched. This is the case irrespective of whether or not the claims are amended following receipt of the search report or during any Chapter II procedure. If the application proceeds into the regional phase before the EPO, the applicant is reminded that a search may be carried out during examination before the EPO (see EPO Guideline C-VI, 8.5), should the problems which led to the Article 17(2) declaration be overcome.